

An Essay
on

The High Potencies.

Respectfully Submitted

To the Faculty of the

Homoeopathic Medical College

Of Pennsylvania
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One thousand eight hundred and fifty three

By
Stephen Remington Jun^r
Of New-York.

In presenting a thesis upon the High Potencies, I am fully aware that I have selected a complicated and somewhat obscure subject, and that my success in its treatment, will mainly depend upon the ground I take to discuss. — This being the case, I have very naturally been led to make a few preliminary remarks, explanatory of the course I intend to pursue in the prosecution of the task imposed upon me, by the regulations of the Institution of which I am proud to be considered a member and candidate to its highest honors.

I do not intend to attempt to frame a theory of my own, nor to adopt the sentiments of any author on this topic, for I well know, that such proof — if proof it may be called — is too easily overthrown by experience, the test of which it must stand or be thrown away as valueless. — Neither do I propose to attempt to prove conclusively, that the high attenuations, do possess any influence over the organism, except, by the relation of such cases as I may be furnished with, in

illustration of my position, and, such reflections as may present themselves in support of the convictions of my own mind, that the high potencies possess therapeutic virtues, in common with the lower ones.

For a part of the cases illustrative of the subject, I am indebted to my kind preceptor, Dr. R. Gardiner, whose character is too well and favorably known to those who will peruse my humble effort, to need any comment from me; but, many kindnesses which I have experienced at his hands on former occasions, and this last one, the assistance which he has kindly rendered me, make it incumbent upon me to acknowledge them, and express my admiration of his professional attainments, as well as, his uniformly gentlemanly and obliging disposition.

Taking it for granted, that the great fundamental principle of the science - "*similia similibus curantur*" - which we call Homoeopathy, stands undisputed, and that the doctrine of attenuation stands by its side, sheltered beneath its broad pinions from the incredulous scrutiny of every homoeopathic practitioner, I shall attempt to offer some reasons, why its less fortunate offspring should be looked upon as illegitimate, or, if I fail in that, I hope at least to show, that it is deserving of trial before it is consigned to oblivion.

The question, "how far may Homoeopathic drugs be attenuated and still retain curative virtues," is, one, that has been a source of dispute among homoeopaths from the time of Hahnemann down to the present. - This dispute has not been confined entirely to the Homoeopathic profession, but has agitated the Allopathic school also, and, words have been multiplied on both sides without much practical benefit, resulting from,

such reasoning. They have tried to dive to the bottom of a subject that does not admit of being so easily fathomed, and, after expending all the argument and philosophical reasoning with which they had equipped themselves, they have arisen to the surface, no wiser, than they were before.

Allopaths have laughed and pointed the finger of scorn at those who advocated infinitesimal doses, and, sought by such means, to exterminate the small band of Homoeopaths from the land, not deeming them worthy of more energetic efforts to expel them confidently, expecting, that the so-called science, Homoeopathy, would die a natural death without any allopathic means being used to hasten its dissolution. But while Allopathy thus mused upon her own self sufficiency, and contemplated with much complacency her own antiquity, the infant science gradually became stronger and stronger, until it arrived at a point, where, its prospects

for future subsistence no longer could be a matter of doubt even to the most antiquated worshippers of Hippocrates. Then, the Lion was aroused from her lethargy - the finger of scorn - the stale jokes upon infinitesimal globules nearly died away; then the press belched forth its thousands and tens of thousands of blank cartridges, false statements, and page after page, volume after volume, of superficial reasoning until the homoeopathic science was gratuitously advertised by its chagrined rival allopathy.

Homoeopaths then were united - Then they could boast of possessing one element among others unknown to Allopathy, harmony - Then every shoulder was put to the car, and its massive wheels rolled triumphantly over the dogmas and traditions of the prevailing school as fast as they were thrown before it, to impede its onward course.

But in the midst of this tranquility "a bone of contention was thrown, a new banner waved in the midst of this harmonious band, upon which, was inscribed in glowing

Capitals, "High dilutions only"!—

Some forsook the banner under which they so gallantly fought, and conquered, and were marshaled under the new ensign, so treacherously insinuated into their midst. The new theory ^{was} put into practice, and the consequence was, that, their patients grew worse and worse, and finally doubted the system and went over to Allopathy and were relieved or else they lost confidence in their medical attendant, and called in another, who did administer the right remedy and in the right way. Thus the "high dilutionists" were forced to give up the indiscriminate use of the high potencies, and return to the ranks from which they had deserted.

But there was still another party whose motto was, "Low and high attenuations". These were not treacherous deserters from the pure principles and examples of this Great Master, but men of observation who held the doctrine "prove all things and hold fast of that which is good".

above the narrow-mindedness of blind prejudice. They were guided by the unerring light of experience and its teachings were studiously observed and followed, the consequence was, that success marked their progress. But this class of Homoeopaths, although they followed the instructions of their master, and were therefore genuine homoeopaths, did not escape persecution and ridicule, even, from those who were professedly their brethren!

That there is still existing, a diversity of opinion upon the subject of doses, or the degree of attenuation to which drugs may be carried, and still retain curative virtues, is not to be wondered at. Neither is it a matter of surprise, that those, who are opposed to the doctrines of Hahnemann, seize upon this lack of harmony among homoeopaths themselves, to prejudice the minds of the public against the science; nor should it surprise us at all, that various sects should grow out of the same science, and some men, styling themselves, homoeopaths, become wiser than their master - in their own estimation - adopting this notion, or that theory

which caters most to their vanity and prejudices, or, from indolence—which no man can be guilty of and still be a good homoeopath—being incapacitated to apply themselves to the thorough investigation and study of the principles upon which they profess to practice.

Hahnemann has plainly ^{that} stated his object in the administration of remedies, was to attenuate them as far as possible, and still produce the desired effect, and that object can never be attained, but, by direct experimentation; this he has left to his successors. Have they done it? Have those, who foolishly denied the possibility of the high or the highest attenuations, possessing any curative virtues upon the organism—have they, I ask, followed the teachings of their great Master, or, contributed one particle towards the development of the principles which he gave? Are they then to be considered true Homoeopaths?

For my own part, I must confess, that,

I cannot see wherein lies the difference between Allopathy and Hahnemannism - except, in the law of cure, *similia similibus curantur* - if it be homoeopathic to use the crude drug or mother tincture. In some cases I admit, that, it may seem justifiable, but, to use those preparations to the exclusion of the higher ones, is, to go back to the very margin of the muddy stream of Allopathy, into which the half-made homoeopath might as well plunge, and thus save the science, of which he is a professed member, from the odium of a mixed practice. Such a course winces either a distrust of the principles of our science on the part of its professed disciples, or else, it shows to the world, that homoeopathy is a fraud and a down right deception.

But it may be asked if "high dilution only, Crude drug or mother tincture, and low dilutions only", are not in accordance with the spirit of Hahnemann, and consequently, not Homoeopathic. What is homoeopathy, and what is in accordance with the spirit of Hahnemann?

That question might be answered in a variety of ways. I would ask, is any professed religious sect entitled to the name of Christian, that ~~does~~ not take the Bible as their guide in the regulation of their views and practice? Is not the Bible the Organon of religion? To the first question I would answer, most unqualifiedly, that such Christians are unworthy of the name. To the second query, I would return an affirmative answer. — Let us apply this to medicine, and see how far it will bear us out in our Argument, and in doing so, I would ask is a professed Homoeopath entitled to that name, who does not take the Organon — the Bible of medicine — as his guide in the regulation of his views and practice? Certainly not. But it may be urged against this conclusion, that the Bible is an inspired volume, and contains the oracles of God; it is therefore, infallible. Although we can not plead infallibility for Hahnemann and his Organon; but Hahnemann has evinced an intuitiveness in the arrangement

and elucidation of his doctrines, that may not be sacrilegious to call almost inspired, but, ^{at} any rate, what ever may be said against Hahnemann's fallibility, one thing is certain, viz, that his suggestions are every way worthy of being tested, and, that it is the duty of every Homoeopath, who has the advancement of the science at all at heart, to endeavour, to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good".

From what has been said, it will be seen, that I am for taking Hahnemann as the guide in the investigation of the doctrines which he has promulgated. It will also be seen, that I only wish to express my own convictions of the exclusivism which exists in the profession, and not, to condemn the use of either attenuation, that experience may have proved to be serviceable in the treatment of disease.

But I might maintain still higher ground. I might speak of the doctrine of dynamization and its importance as a part of the proof that might be brought forward in

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support of the assertion that the high, or the highest Attenuations, do possess therapeutic virtues, in common with the lower ones. I might speak of the influence of trituration in eliciting the medicinal energies of drug atoms, of the infinite divisibility of matter, &c. &c. but, I must leave those topics untouched, as I have already extended my remarks beyond the limits that I at first intended, to be governed by, and confine myself almost exclusively, to one branch of the subject, viz. the result of experience.

Our great Master has given us a criterion to go by, in the administration of our remedies that has been verified by experience, time and again, as hosts of cases have been published, clearly demonstrating the fact, viz. that the high Attenuations do possess medical properties - to a certain extent - not inferior to the lower ones.

The criterion above alluded to, is contained in the following words, which may be found in the Organon, Hahnemann says: "It has been fully proved by pure experiments,

that when a disease does not evidently depend upon the impaired state of an important organ, even though it were of a chronic nature, and complicated, and due care has been taken to remove from the patient all foreign medicinal influence, the dose of the Homoeopathic remedy can never be sufficiently small as to be inferior to the power of the natural disease which it can, at least, partially extinguish and cure, provided it be capable of producing only a small increase of symptoms immediately after it is administered.

Again he says:

"This incontrovertible axiom, founded upon experience, will serve as a rule by which doses of all Homoeopathic medicines, without exception, are to be attenuated to such a degree, that after being introduced into the body, they shall merely produce an almost insensible aggravation of the disease."

Now we have a theory founded upon and verified by the experience of numerous homoeopaths, in this country, and

in Europe. I shall not pretend to say in how many cases where the high potencies have been given, Aggravations have been observed; but, that they have been seen, is a demonstrable fact, a few cases which I shall copy, will serve to illustrate.

Case 1.

The following case was related to me by my preceptor, Dr. Gardiner. Dr. B., age about 50 yrs. Afflicted with a chronic Affection of the Spine, attended with violent neuralgic pains. Bell 200th has been repeatedly administered, and always produced such a violent Aggravation as to render it necessary to give her an Antidote, and lay aside the use of the remedy.

Case 2.

"B., a farmer, who has been affected with a chronic cough for the last seventeen or eighteen years, and who has been abandoned by allopathic physicians as Consumptive, consulted me on the 9th of July 1842. In looking over the record which I took of this case, I find it accompanied with the remark, "appears to be a hopeless case". The expectoration

was white, tenacious, sweetish, raw; every coughing fit was preceded by oppression of breathing, and was aggravated by the least motion; obstruction of the nose every morning, a good deal of itching at the anus; sourknot produced flatulence, and improvement in the evening. Gave him every two or three months a dose of Phosph., Sulph., Iod., Ars., Lycop. (the latter on account of a fungus of the knee, which disappeared), Sep., Natr. Mur., all these remedies being administered in the 30th potency, two pellets as a dose, some remedies being given twice, Phosphorus three times; but all these remedies did, was to keep him alive. Towards the end of September, 1844, the disease seemed to grow upon him. I gave him Phosph. 200, two pellets in a tumbler full of water, to take a teaspoonful every evening.

After the third dose, the symptoms became so violent that the relatives expected his death at every moment. The medicine was stopped; sugar of milk being substituted. A gradual improvement set in; and in six

weeks, this patient, who had been abandoned as incurable, had recovered perfect health, and is now one of the most robust and healthy individuals in our district".

3.

"On the 23d of May, 1840, a robust Hanoverian, of twenty-three years, applied to me for relief against epilepsy, which he had for five years past. The fits came on every four or five weeks. They were preceded by shaking, contraction of the left arm, and loss of consciousness. Afterwards, headache and bilious vomiting. In his healthy periods he was frequently attacked with vomiting after eating carrots, sourkruit, beans, etc. Took Sulp. 30, two doses of Calc. 30, separated by Lycop. 30. The attacks ceased until October, when he was attacked with a sort of nervous fever, which was treated allopathically, owing to the great distance of the patient's residence from my own. Afterwards he took Calc. 30, which suppressed the fits until April 17th, 1841, when he took spirituous drinks, which

brought back the fits. They were again suppressed for six months by Agaricus 30, and Calc. 30. Every five or six months the patient's health was disturbed, and he had to take either Calc. or Silic. On the 30th of March, 1844, he took a dose of Silic. 200, after which he had several violent fits a day, for eight days in succession, and especially bad in the night; but after that lapse of time they ceased, and have never returned since until this day".

The foregoing cases are reported by Dr. Boenninghausen who reports several cases of acute diseases, in which his high potencies were used, and he prefaces them by the following remarks:

"It has been supposed that the lower potencies are preferable to the higher in the treatment of acute diseases. I have never seen this doctrine confirmed by experience, and the following cases show the contrary to be true. I. Mrs. N., thirty-eight years old,

whom I had cured of a chronic headache, with closing of both eyes, by Sepia, was attacked with a violent and excessively painful inflammation of the left Mamma.

Took one teaspoonful of a solution of Phosp. 400, in a tumbler full of water; was completely cured in forty-eight hours.

II. Mrs. H., wife of a high public functionary, had suffered for some weeks past with a violent face-ache, which had become intolerable under allopathic treatment. It corresponded to Spigelia. The lady being extremely sensitive, I caused Spigel. 200, to be dissolved in a cup full of water, had one teaspoonful of that solution mixed in a second cup full of water, and directed the patient to take one teaspoonful of this latter solution. The effect of this dose was violent, in spite of my precaution. Immediately after taking the dose, she had an attack of the pain which was more violent than any of the preceding ones.

had been. This attack lasted only five minutes; it then ceased altogether, and the pain has never returned since".

Dr. Boenninghausen reports another case that I should like to quote, but, space will not permit. But I must mention the experience of my excellent preceptor, in the treatment of dysentery. He says, "I have used the high attenuations, in the dysentery of the last season, with entire success. I used the high attenuations almost exclusively, from the 200th. upward". Among the many cases that he would have kindly furnished me with, wherein he had used the high potencies, I have only room for one of those treated in this manner.

Mrs. M., age 48. dysentery attended with the following symptoms: frequent, bloody, slimy discharges, violent tenesmus, fever and thirst; suppression of urine; extreme soreness, and tenderness of the abdomen and cutting pains previous to evacuation. &c. &c. Several remedies, of the lower potencies, were used; Coloy. Mero. Ars, New York.

but without any benefit; and the case was fast assuming a discouraging aspect, when, Colocy. Sulph.: Ars. Canth. Capsi. and Nuc. Vom., all of them being of the high attenuation (200th and upward), were used. One or two doses ^{being administered} in the course of twenty-four hours, entirely restored the patient to health.

Another acute case, treated by Dr. G., I must relate. — Mr. J. F. Age 50 yrs. — Was attacked with a violent Rheumatic affection of the right knee. The pain was very acute, so much so, that he was not disposed to use the limb at all. He had suffered from it for a length of time. The treatment was as follows:
Dec 21st 1852 — Rhus. 200th. was administered in the evening, and, in one hour and a half after the first dose, the pain ceased, and he had a good night's rest and continued to improve until the
24th Dec., when one dose of Bng 200th. was given; after which, the symptoms continued to improve. —

Dec 26th. One powder of Ant. Coed. was given, after which, no more medicine was required, there only remaining a slight stiffness in the joint, and he went to his business the next day, perfectly cured. —

I have many more cases which I have obtained from Dr. G's, experience, illustrating the value of the high potencies in the treatment of acute and chronic diseases; but as I have nearly ^{exhausted} my space, I shall have to content myself with merely giving a brief outline of one or two of them. Mrs. J. age 64, Orysipelas of the face, which had spread itself over the entire scalp and both ears. Face much swollen, fever and thirst, pulse active, tongue greatly coated, restless, &c. &c. — Dec 22^d. Bell 6th was given and continued about thirty-six hours, without benefit. 24th Sack. 200. 25. Bell 200. one dose — 26th. another dose of Bell. 200. 27th a third dose of Bell 200th — 28th Sack. 200th was given, and, at the end of that time, she was entirely cured. One circumstance, worthy of remark in this case, is, that she improved every time the

Sachsis, was administered. Another case of a Lady suffering from Leucorrhoea, of a very violent nature, was permanently cured by two doses of Sepia. 200th. —

The cases that I have related, I leave to be explained by some one more competent — if they can be explained at all — than myself to do so, and simply state my own conclusions, to which I have arrived in the prosecution of the task, which, I have but imperfectly completed.

- I. That the high attenuations do act.
- II. That they produce — in many cases — aggravation of the symptoms.
- III. That they are suited both to acute and Chronic diseases.
- III. That the remedy must be strictly Homoeopathic to the disease.
- V. That all medicinal substances are to be strictly avoided for the whole time while the medicine is acting in the system.
- VI. That it is the duty of every Homoeopathic practitioner, to try the high potencies in his own practice, which no man will refuse to do, unless, he is blinded by prejudice, or, "joined to his idols". —